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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE ASSOCIATION

OF THE

ALUMNI OF HARVARD COLLEGE,

JULY 20, 1854.

BY

CORNELIUS C. FELTON, LL.D.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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A D D R E S S .

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN : —

As I entered the harbor of Boston, after an absence of more than a year ; as I gazed upon the islands and shores reposing under a lovely evening sky in May, and upon the lighted mansions, where happiness and freedom nestle secure ; as, an hour after, the halls of Harvard greeted my view, and the lights from students' rooms, and from the dwellings of friends and neighbors, streamed through the evening air, the familiar lines of the poet involuntary moved harmonious numbers in my memory : —

“ Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land ;
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
 From wandering on a foreign strand ? ”

But scarcely landed from an Atlantic voyage, I was waylaid by your committee, and ordered to stand and deliver — an oration. To me who am no orator, as so many Brutuses I see around me are, the order was sufficiently formidable, but not to be evaded. I acknowledge the honor of being invited to address such an assembly on such an occasion ; but, flattering as the

invitation was, I felt conscious of being led to undertake the task more by good-will to my brethren of the University than by any reasonable hope of fulfilling their just expectations.

Gentlemen, the tie between us on this occasion is our common relationship as sons of Harvard. We come together, under the shadow of her ancient halls and academic groves, to brighten and strengthen the golden chain that binds us, remotely or directly, to our Alma Mater. Welcome to the pleasant light of this day, and to the blessed associations of friendship and letters, and to the dear memories of youth, with which its dawn came freighted to our hearts. We are gathered here to-day from many divergent walks of life, — from the beaten and weary paths of labor, from the conflicts of the Senate and the Forum, from the sacred desk, from the teacher's chair, from the bedside of the sick and dying, — to spend a few hours together, as friends, gentlemen, scholars, — as sons of Harvard, — forgetting the things which divide us in the secular turmoils of the world, and remembering only those that unite us, in this Sabbath of lettered and social delight.

We come together as alumni of Harvard, under auspices peculiarly cheering for the present, and prophetic of good for the future. Ruled by a succession of Presidents, whose names form no small part of the honor of the country, our University has steadily advanced, with more than youthful vigor. I see before me the venerable form of one, — the only survivor of his class, — who gave to her service more than sixteen of the best years of his life; whose heart still throbs with the fires of youth under the snows of fourscore;

whose voice like the voice of Nestor is still heard, in clarion tones, when a public wrong threatens to tarnish the fair fame of his country; who, with an undying love for the cherishing mother of his intellectual youth, still crowns our literary festivals with the benediction of his presence. Another distinguished alumnus — whose rich scholarship had long been the pride of our literature, and whose varied eloquence, heard from the desk, from the professor's chair, from the halls of legislation, from popular meetings, from great panegyric assemblies in honor of the illustrious dead, seemed to revive in our republic the graces of republican eloquence in ancient Athens — has linked his name and fame with the distinctions of our University. The historian, whose labors have elucidated the fairest pages in the annals of the heroic age of America, has consecrated his learning and ability, as professor and president, to the service of Harvard: and now, when the guidance of the University has been intrusted to the steady hand of the eminent philosopher and divine, who, with the approbation of the governing bodies, and the consenting applause of all good men, has taken his place in that lengthening line, she is still advancing in her career of usefulness and honor, with increasing tokens of popular regard and practical success.

I say further, that we come together to-day under auspices peculiarly flattering to the prosperity of the cause of sound education and literary culture,—of scientific progress and the refinements of art. These scenes — so dear to our youth — have lost no charm even to those of us, in whose sight the realm of youth has faded into a distant Elysian field. We, too, may exclaim with the poet:—

" I feel the gales that from ye blow
 A momentary bliss bestow,
 As, waving fresh their gladsome wing,
 My weary soul they seem to soothe,
 And, redolent of joy and youth,
 To breathe a second Spring."

But human life, in its most favored forms, is a mingled story of joy and sorrow. The recollections of an hour like this, however pleasant, come to us touched with the sad but inevitable hues of mourning and bereavement. We look in vain to-day for more than one friend, formerly wont to greet us here. The beautiful retirement, so long graced by the virtues of NORTON, is no longer cheered by his placid presence. That profound theologian and elegant scholar, whose exactitude of thought and Attic purity of language rendered conversation as instructive as the best of books, and whose refined cordiality made social life delightful, — whose mind moved, with a native stateliness, in the higher region of human thought, — who vindicated, with all the resources of deep and various learning, the records of the Christian faith from the excesses of a too daring historical scepticism, in a style of unrivalled clearness and power, — has passed from the scene of earthly labor and enjoyment to the employments and joys of immortality. But his gracious shade still seems to haunt yonder sweet seclusion, and his placid smile to welcome with serenest salutation the returning friend. Another associate of former days I see no more, — the late Professor GREENLEAF, — ours by adoption, — who, after a youth of toil and patient suffering, gave the rich maturity of his years to the elucidation of the Law in this place, the priceless value of whose instructions is now acknowledged as

far as the widening boundaries of our republic extend ; who, not born to affluence, and not bred up to scholarly studies, achieved an honorable scholarship in the university of life ; who, as a professional author, placed his name high among the highest, and as a Christian writer gained the gratitude of believers, by founding the Christian faith on the basis of rigorous legal argument ; to whom belongs the glory of having drawn up the first written constitution for an oppressed and suffering continent, and for a race that has drunk the bitter draught of slavery since the gray dawn of the history of man. He, too, has passed away, in the sleep of the righteous, but he has left us the imperishable monument of his high ability and spotless character, and the memory of his faithfulness to the good of man and the honor of God. More recently, and more immediately connected with our Alma Mater, the genial SALES has died. His beaming countenance and cheery voice, and hearty pressure of the hand, gladdened our hearts, whenever we met him "in his customary way." In his fervid youth he fled from the Old World to win here the freedom of thought and action he sought in vain among his native Pyrenees. Who can forget the erect and manly figure, the pleasant countenance, the frank and cordial salutation, the contagious and inextinguishable laugh, of that old man with the powdered head, whom, alas ! we shall see no more in this world, — by whose death the attractions of Harvard are lessened and its gayety eclipsed. And busy memory recalls the name of FARRAR, the patient invalid of many years, whose studious manhood was given to the University ; who knew how to illuminate the truth of science by the charm of an eloquence, which we, of the

middle period of life, listened to in our student days with never satiating delight: — he has found in the repose of the tomb a refuge from the protracted sufferings, which, though borne with constancy, clouded the serenity of his spirit in the closing years of his life. Beloved memories of the dead mingle with the pleasant greetings and social joys of the living, and the eye wanders to many a vacant place, —

“ And phantoms sway each haunt well known,
Which the loved and lost were wont to own.”

As we move onward in the procession of life, it becomes us to pause at the often opening gate of the tomb, and, having paid our tribute of grateful recollection to the loved and good who have preceded us across its solemn threshold, to draw instruction and encouragement from their examples, and then, sobered by the thoughts of death, to reassume the tasks of duty, striving so to live that the world shall be the better, and that our names, like theirs, may be hal-
lowed memories to those who shall come after us.

Gentlemen, the occasion which has called us together, and the names of the departed, which naturally dwell upon our lips in this place, suggest the topic, on which I deem it not inappropriate to the day, and to this cultivated audience, to speak for the brief space allotted me: — the relations of our country to the literature, science, and art of the world, and the special duty of the American people to uphold and promote them.

The educated men of a country are those who have been trained up in the nurture of science, the cultivation of letters, the embellishments of art. The foun-

dations of their speculative and practical life have been laid in the study of truth ; and it is to be presumed that a guiding influence has grown up from their early studies, controlling and shaping the course of conduct, however variously applied in the several pursuits and professions into which men are led by taste, inclination, or interest. For all professions, and all honorable pursuits, rest ultimately on general principles, — on science, on philosophy. Letters and art unfold the element of beauty, and clothe the dignity of life with the graceful attractions of taste. A liberal education, gentlemen, pledged you, as by early vows, in whatever chosen career your courses may have run, to cherish the love of letters, and to keep your loyalty to science, according to the full measure of your ability. There are many patriotic duties ; but in my judgment there is no duty more purely patriotic than that of vindicating the worth and dignity of intellectual pursuits ; there are many cosmopolitan duties, but none of higher obligation than that of adding something to the world's intellectual treasury, upon which we are ourselves for ever drawing.

I deem it a peculiar felicity that our Cambridge University sustains relations so intimate with the neighboring city of Boston. From the earliest days of our Commonwealth, a series of mutual benefits, a constant interchange of high services, have marked each successive period of their common history. Commerce, spreading her woven wings over every sea, brings the wealth of every land into the coffers of the merchants of Boston ; and how nobly that wealth — the tribute of every clime to energies honorably and wisely directed — has been consecrated in no stinted

measure to intellectual progress, let the names of merchants answer, who have built these halls, helped to make these collections, endowed these professorships, enlarged this library. On the other hand, Harvard has requited the benefaction by helping to elevate commerce beyond the love of money-making, which has sometimes been charged upon it in reproach. The sons of Harvard, — whether nurtured here in studious youth, or adopted from other and busier scenes into her literary family, — I rejoice to believe, have stood in the foremost ranks of the commercial as of other professions, and have done a manly part to give it that liberal character it enjoys, by universal consent, in the ancient city of the Puritans. The auspicious alliance between commerce and intellectual culture, so conspicuous in the Athenian democracy, — so brilliant in the mediæval republics of Italy, — seems once more to be reviving here.

It has sometimes been made a question, whether the cultivation of science, letters, and art is favorable to public virtue and the maintenance of political liberty. It is supposed that such periods as the golden ages of Augustus and Louis XIV. show the affinity between a high state of culture and the most slavish maxims and most oppressive practices of despotism. No doubt a despot of enlightened views — a Polycrates, a Periander, a Hiero — knows the wisdom of surrounding his court with the graces of letters and art; no doubt rich pensions and regal luxury may blind the eyes of poets and scholars raised to wealth and social distinction by the bounties of the throne. The courtly flatteries of Horace and Virgil impose upon us by the dignity of antiquity and the classic stateliness of the

Roman tongue. But we feel the full baseness of the prostration of genius to power, when we read the impious adulation of Boileau to his royal master, the vain, profligate, and hollow-hearted king, whom the Muse of History has fawned upon by giving his name to the brilliant but superficial age which heralded the direst shame and disaster to a gallant victim. When, in the *Jerusalem Delivered*, — one of the noblest monuments of the genius of modern Italy, — we find Tasso hailing his ducal patron as the magnanimous Alphonso, we follow in imagination the unhappy poet to the narrow and filthy dungeon into which he was cast by that magnanimous prince, to expiate in chains and madness the crime of loving a princess of the house whose name would long since have been forgotten but for Tasso's immortal verse. There are, indeed, enough and more than enough of such memorials of cringing and subserviency, in the ages which groaned under despotic rule. I claim for letters, science, and art no absolute power to raise their followers above the weaknesses of human nature, and the influences of the times in which they live. I do not know that poets, scholars, and sages have a more unconditional passion for neglect, starvation, and martyrdom, than other mortals. Yet, as we look over the long array of famous men who have consecrated themselves to lofty studies, we cannot doubt that the air of liberty is the congenial atmosphere of the Muses; that the most brilliant periods of letters, science, and art have been precisely the most auspicious periods of political freedom. The age of Augustus was, doubtless, a great era for Roman letters; but how feebly burned its lights compared with those which shine upon us from

the tumultuous supremacy of Athens ! and how the radiance of the Great Monarch himself, surrounded by poets and scholars, — even the Corneilles, Molières, Racines, and Boileaus of those days, — grows dim before the wealth of art and poetry in the mighty expansion of genius which has clothed the Italian republics with imperishable renown. Yes, the Muses follow most willingly in the train of freedom ; —

“ Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant power,
And coward vice that revels in her chains.”

The natural affinities of science, letters, and art are with honor, virtue, and liberty, and he is no friend of popular rights and republican government who refuses to encourage the higher cultivation of the intellect, exercised on its appropriate objects, among the citizens of a free country. The Almighty has inspired man with understanding, which can never rest content with outward prosperity and the joys of sense. He has an imagination demanding to be gratified ; a reason seeking insatiably for truth ; a sense of the beautiful, requiring to be ministered unto by the creations of the inspired poet, the sculptor, the painter, the architect. His faculties embrace the world within him, and around him, and above him, — and his aspirations wander through eternity. To say that the exercise of these — the highest of the human faculties — cannot find a fitting sphere in a republican polity, is to say that a republican polity fails to reach the noblest goal of humanity ; and that man must look elsewhere than to a republic for the truest development of the nature God has given him. From such premises no other conclusion is logical or possible.

And yet, in the face of such inevitable results, there are men who seek to win the favor of the people by cheapening the value of the higher sciences; disparaging elegant letters, and stirring up jealousies against those men and those institutions which aim to raise the standard of culture, and to urge the progress of scientific growth beyond the measure of the palpable wants of practical life. The results they can see, touch, taste, handle, and weigh, are, in their apprehension, the only objects of education or of study worthy of popular regard and public support. Against all such narrow views the friends of a true culture have to wage, in the real if not apparent interests of the people, an unceasing and very wearisome warfare. For man is placed in this universe, — so attractive and marvellous, — not that he may dine and sup and sleep and die and be forgotten, but that he may live the life of the intellect and the soul. He is created in the image of God: and God is not only omnipotent and omnipresent, but omniscient. According to the measure of his faculties, let him then be like God in this, as well as his other attributes. If he cannot fathom the unfathomable mind of the Almighty, at least let him raise himself to the dignity of an intelligent spectator of the Almighty's works. Is man, when free, less fitted for these divine occupations than when enslaved? And is it to be settled as the republican doctrine, that the *Know-Nothing* is the truest image of the ALL-KNOWING?

It is a popular theme to exalt the present age above all the past: perhaps rightly. But if we scan the condition of the world, the eye of the most hopeful finds the prospect, if not absolutely melancholy, at

least a darkly shaded picture. Europe is even now bestridden by the Middle Ages, like a nightmare. — Old incorporated interests of caste, of church, of special privilege and hereditary rank, almost everywhere obstruct the path of progress: as the habitations of men, built many centuries ago, compel their occupants to adapt themselves to their houses, instead of adapting their houses to their own wants. In some of the countries of Europe, as in Prussia, education is admirably organized; but the legitimate effects of such a system are stayed by the despotic principles of government. Men are bandaged and swathed by the restraints of the police, as infants are rolled up in swaddling-clothes to keep them from breaking their limbs. Of what avail for the true purposes of civic life are reading and writing and grammar, to a man whose personal identity is a passport, and who cannot be trusted as far as the next village without the gracious permission of a government official with a sword at his side and a moustache on his lip? And what shall we say of polished France, — our old friend and generous ally, — who willingly bows her neck to the yoke of a rigorous despotism, and by a popular vote, unexampled in the history of elections, surrenders the hopes of constitutional government, silences the voice of parliamentary eloquence, and chooses the autocratic will of an absolute, though enlightened master, for her inexorable destiny? True, he is ruling by a right in one sense more legitimate than any other existing government. He is making Paris the centre of European civilization, and the most superb city of the continent. He is consolidating his throne on the prosperity of the Empire; while radicals and reformers so lately stand-

ing on the pinnacle of fame and power — the very idols of a worshipping people — are languishing in prison, dragging out a monotonous existence in penal colonies, or sighing in nameless obscurity over the blight of political theories which they loved, not wisely but too well. But with all this outward show of prosperity there is no free expression of opinion. The voice of eloquence is hushed ; art is becoming a flatterer to the Imperial will ; history cannot safely tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth ; and the enthusiasm of science is growing feebler and fainter amidst the clang of arms, and the mimic warfare of camps and reviews.

Strangely contrasted with the brilliant and powerful empire of France are the comparatively powerless states of Sardinia, presenting yet one of the brightest features in the aspect of Continental Europe. The honest and enlightened monarch of these states, though descended from despots, dares to give his people liberty, and to build up the institutions of freedom amidst surrounding despotisms. He dares to give them a constitution, though it may clip the prerogatives of his crown ; he trusts them with popular elections, though parliamentary opposition to his ministry may spring up ; he fears not liberty of speech and the press, though these formidable engines may be and have been turned against himself. He dares to throw aside the superstitious observances by which his ancestors signalized their subjection to a haughty Church, though the Pope's legate demand his passport, and the Vatican muster its sleeping thunders. He makes churchman and layman equal before the law, though he draw upon himself the hatred of Vienna and Rome ; and he sup-

ports with strong arm the fabric of social order, un-
 awed by the bitter imprecations of Red Republicans
 and the mystic anathemas of Mazzini. He is devel-
 oping the prosperity of his country by constructing
 roads and railways, encouraging manufactures and
 commerce, and relieving his people from the burdens
 transmitted by the Middle Ages. Education is an ob-
 ject of his special care. He has founded schools, and
 built up a great and noble university, in which science
 and letters are freely taught. The lovers of liberty
 from other states take refuge under the ægis of the
 constitutional government of Turin. Parliamentary
 eloquence — stranger so many centuries to those fair re-
 gions — is making its voice heard in the noble language
 of Italy. In proportion as he is hated by despots, the
 monarch is adored by his people. The happiness he
 has restored to them, by making them the masters of
 their material and intellectual resources, gives some
 hope, perhaps the only hope, that Italy will in time be
 regenerated by so brilliant an example.

But the traveller, passing from the confines of this
 regenerated state, and wandering over the classic fields
 of Central and Southern Italy, encounters a melancholy
 change. He treads the ground consecrated to eternal
 fame by ancient achievements and by the transcendent
 glories of modern art. He gazes with emotion too deep
 for expression on the grandest creations of genius, which
 adorn in affluent profusion these seats of ancient re-
 nown. Added to these splendid results of civilization,
 he beholds the Christian religion changing the aspects
 of life. He enters the church of Christ, gorgeous with
 the spoils of the ages. He gazes admiringly upon the
 glorious pile, reared by mediæval piety, and conse-

crated to the service of the Eternal. He listens to song and rite which seem to bear on the wings of devotion the worshipping soul up to the throne of God. But as he passes out from the curtained door of the sanctuary, his thoughts are rudely dragged to earth by the agonizing cries of human hearts, out of which hope and joy and every consoling thought have been pressed by the crushing despotism of ages.

“ How has kind Heaven adorned the happy land,
And scattered blessings with a watchful hand ;
But what avail her unexhausted stores,
Her blooming mountains, and her sunny shores,
With all the gifts that heaven and earth impart ,
The smiles of nature, and the charms of art,
While proud oppression in her valleys reigns,
And tyranny usurps her happy plains ?
The poor inhabitant beholds in vain
The reddening orange and the swelling grain ;
Joyless he sees the growing oils and wines,
And in the myrtle’s fragrant shade repines ;
Starves in the midst of nature’s bounty curst,
And in the loaded vineyard dies for thirst.”

Is this then the lame and impotent conclusion to which science and art and Christianity—to which modern genius and ancient fame—have conducted the race of man ? Are despotism, priestcraft, profligacy, and beggary all that remain of the cheering visions that hovered before the minds of the lawgivers of the world,—the poets, the orators, preachers, saints, and martyrs ;—that breathe in the speculations of Plato and Cicero, in the stern verse of Dante, in the supernatural loveliness of Rafael’s Madonnas, in the Apollo of the Vatican, the Transfiguration, the Dome of St. Peter’s ? Are all these inspired thoughts embodied in matchless forms but the prelude, the overture, to a hideous drama of beggary and fraud, and filth

and death? God forbid that the ideal shapes that have filled the teeming minds of poets and philosophers should prove to be all the airy pageants of an excited fancy; that all the hopes of fair humanity, which have nerved the hearts of great leaders of men to do and dare, for the sake of a better future, should vanish before the disenchanting touch of reality, as the dreams of the night flit away with the morning's dawn.

Have we reason to hope, that letters, science, and art will ever be, in the highest forms, united with popular freedom and general happiness? And can we venture to anticipate, that our country has this sublime destiny to fulfil? It seems to me a singular oversight, that the framers of the Constitution of the United States should have omitted from their view the intellectual necessities of a great nation. Washington, in his Farewell Address, says: "Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious Principles." And immediately after, as if the connection of ideas were too obvious to admit a moment's doubt, he adds: "Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge," — knowledge being, in the judgment of that great man, expressed in the most solemn act of his life, the indispensable condition of national morality, as "morality is a necessary spring of popular government." We have doubtless adopted principles of general education, which, if faithfully adhered to, will lay an admirable foundation for the special development of science, letters, and art,

constituting the structure of American civilization. But when one of the most illustrious Presidents of the United States — a man who never, in the midst of public cares or the rivalries of the political arena, forgot the debt he owed to good learning — recommended to Congress the establishment of an Observatory, a hue and cry was raised; a kind of *γραφὴ παρανόμων*, or impeachment for unconstitutional proceedings, was entered against him, as in ancient Athens, when the enemies of a great statesman thought they could wield this instrument to his damage in the estimation of the changeful Demos; and no doubt the unconstitutional proposition to build an Observatory was a potent means of changing the administration of the country. It was a malignant star that shed its influence on that paragraph in President Adams's message; but the stars grew milder at a later period, when the Observatory of Washington, which has conferred such signal benefit upon the country, was smuggled into existence under the *alias* of a *Depot for Charts*. "A rose by any other name will smell as sweet"; and if another name quiets the scruples of tender constitutional consciences, it were unwise to quarrel with a word.

But let us not be unjust to the services our government has rendered to the cause of science. It has sent out Exploring Expeditions, which have contributed largely to the knowledge of our globe and its inhabitants; it has furnished the means of publishing a Nautical Almanac, under the care of Captain Davis, whose professional skill and scientific acquirements have already given it the highest authority, abroad as well as at home; it has organized and munificently supported the Coast Survey, which when completed will

be one of the most brilliant scientific achievements of the age; it has redeemed the Smithsonian bequest, for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, from its perilous situation as a State loan, honestly paid up the interest, and set an institution at work, — (I enter not here into the recent controversy on the construction of an act of Congress,) — which has circulated all over the world a series of original volumes, not only bestowing fame on the munificent giver, but crowning the recipient nation with the praise of having enlarged the boundaries of knowledge.

It cannot be asserted, with any truth, that our country is not rich enough to support the institutions, and encourage the investigations of science, on a scale of the most imposing magnitude. We exhibit to the world the unparalleled spectacle of a nation whose annual resources more than equal the annual expenditure, besides being substantially free from debt. While other governments are anxiously devising the means to draw more money from the people, our cabinet ministers are put to their wit's end to keep an overflowing treasury down to the level of the public wants. In private life, enormous fortunes are held by individuals, unburdened by the fixed demands that press upon the means of the great hereditary possessors in Europe. The proportion of small fortunes — of independent, though not excessive incomes — is unequalled elsewhere; while among the classes who earn their bread by the toil of the brain or the labor of the hand, almost all are able to supply with modest competence their daily wants, and educate their children respectably. This state of things presents a striking difference from the condition of the most

prosperous nations in Europe. England, our mother land, in whose rural churchyards the dust of our ancestors reposes, — whose pleasant homes are tenanted by families, kith and kin to our own, — is struggling under a national debt which staggers an ordinary financial imagination to conceive. The annual expenditure, for carrying on her government, for supporting her army and navy, maintaining the royal household, and paying the pension list, is prodigious; and the burden of the national Church weighs heavily on the resources of the country. Notwithstanding the colossal fortunes inherited from the past, or created by commercial, manufacturing, or professional success, the poverty that pervades both city and country, even after the relief afforded by emigration to a disease seemingly desperate and remediless, is yet appalling in extent and intensity. It is true that England, at this moment, with her commerce, fleets, and armies, and her wonderful energies by sea and land, is the foremost power of all this world. The culture of a thousand years has moulded her surface into the most exquisite forms of natural beauty. The landscapes — the goodly prospects that spread in every direction — present a never-ceasing enchantment. The fields and parks of England seem to the traveller from another country a Paradise Regained. The summer garniture of smiling plains, the velvet lawns, groves, and avenues, the green hedges and wild-flowers, resonant with the song of birds in endless variety, charm the eye and delight the ear; while her stately castles tell at once the tale of ancestral glory and of present grandeur. And London is the heart of the world; it is not a city, but, as a French writer describes it, a province covered

with houses. Yet, horribly discordant with the more than regal stateliness of its West End streets and squares and parks, hard by them want and wretchedness and guilt and woe densely congregate in forlorn quarters, — presenting a ghastly spectacle, which sickens the heart, and makes hope to die within us. To call the condition of these outcasts of modern civilization beastly, is to wrong the character of any beast with whose natural history even Agassiz is acquainted. But these unhappy beings have found their good Samaritans among the most gifted intellects, and the noblest names, that grace the roll of England's fame. The great writer who has increased the gayety of nations, and touched with the truest pathos that ever drew tears from human eyes the beating heart of the world, — whose genius, flashing out in the obscurity of his youth, encompassed his early manhood, and flames around his middle life with imperishable brightness, — whose writings, numerous and admirable as they are, constitute but a small part of his services to humanity, compared with the beauty of his daily life, crowned with deeds of good to man, — this man, now standing at the height of influence and fame, loved by the lowest as their brother and honored by the highest as their peer, having won his way to this preëminence by no unmanly compliance “where thrift may follow fawning,” — this Charles Dickens must never be forgotten in any allusion to the hopes or the greatness of England. Closely associated with him in works of beneficence, an eminent nobleman, the Earl of Shaftesbury, has consecrated his talents and experience, the influence of his high birth and his position as a peer of England, to the poor and lowly, — from the wretch-

ed factory children sinking under cruel tasks into premature decrepitude, to the sons and daughters of woe and want who crowd the dreadful retreats of infamy in London. I the more readily pay my humble tribute to these illustrious names, so honorably representing the genius and the rank of England, because both, I think, have been hardly dealt with in the popular judgment of this country; the one, for the ill-considered sarcasms which, in earlier days, he levelled against our countrymen; and the other, for the freedom with which, especially on the occasion of a recent visit of an American writer to England, he has spoken upon that ominous subject, negro slavery in the United States. But I submit that a few satirical descriptions, even were they unmerited, are not to weigh against the world of obligations we owe to Charles Dickens for having made society happier and better; and though I do not think the Earl of Shaftesbury considers well all the difficulties, economical and constitutional, with which the appalling question of slavery is surrounded here, yet I *do* think, and I will say it in this place, that an English nobleman, whose active humanity has helped to rescue a hundred thousand of his own unhappy countrymen — the outcasts of London — from the filthy dens in which they were perishing, body and soul, has earned the right to raise his voice of warning against the wrongs and crimes of nations, wherever existing, and under whatever *pr*etexts or dire necessities their existence is endured.

With all the difficulties of her position, what has not England done, inspired by the unconquerable spirit of liberty, for the moral and intellectual improvement of the race? It is true the friends of universal

education are still struggling there, against a powerful party, for the establishment of those principles of unsectarian instruction which here are held as axioms. Corporation interests set themselves in array against the increasing demands for secular education, and a large division of the Established Church, perplexed with fear of change, and I believe with honest fears of dangerous consequences, resist the introduction of a national system, unless under the safeguards of the national Church. But time — and no long time — will doubtless show all such apprehensions groundless. It is a noteworthy fact, that A CATHOLIC GENTLEMAN, the Right Honorable Thomas Wyse, now her Majesty's ambassador in Athens, — a gentleman of the rarest intellectual endowments, the finest taste, and the most accurate learning, — has been one of the chief and most successful advocates of secular education, having by tongue and pen, and by personal efforts in and out of Parliament, most effectually labored in this great popular interest. He has been denounced by zealots of both Churches; but it is a lesson for thoughtful minds, and may well suggest the wisdom of charitable construction to Protestant alarmists, that Protestant England will owe the inestimable blessing of free education, in great part, to the enlightened and generous CATHOLIC whose eloquent writings have conferred upon him, in popular speech, the distinguishing appellation of Education Wyse. In the stir and turmoil of a distant and costly war, the great measures of educational reform are urged forward with undiminished vigor, the very latest news from England having brought the gratifying intelligence, that Dissenters are no longer to be excluded from the honors of the ancient University of Oxford.

It may be — though God avert the day — that the power of England shall in time be broken down. Far in the future her armies may be scattered, no more to maintain her martial prowess under the pomp of banners on the stricken field. Her navies, now drawing their stately lines along the shores of Tenedos and Troy, or ploughing the waters of the Euxine, or guarding the Bosphorus and the palaces of ancient Byzantium from the Northern spoiler, or carrying their thunders to the coasts of the Baltic, may be swept from the seas on which they have so long borne the might of England in triumph ; her Bank, now gorged with wealth beyond the dreams of avarice to conceive, may be drained until its coffers are exhausted ; and power, and wealth, and martial glory, may pass, in the awful revolutions of history, to other lands. But the intellectual rule of England can never be overthrown : the sceptre of Shakespeare and Milton, and Bacon and Newton, can never be broken. Her more than imperial sway over the minds of men shall make her, through all coming ages, a living force, a mighty agency, in the fulfilment of the destiny of man.

In our country, there are noble advantages attached to the position of a man of science or letters. Eminent services in these departments are honored with a cordial response, not only from the lettered classes, but from the great heart of the people. Let a Lyell, or Agassiz, or Gould, or Gray, or Silliman, be announced to address an audience on the laws of nature, which they know so well how to expound, and the lecture-room is crowded with eager throngs hanging with rapt attention on the speaker's lips. Nothing surprises the

European inquirer more than the zeal with which common men resort by thousands to the scientific and literary courses of eminent teachers in America. Recently, on the continent of Europe, I was often questioned by the friends of our great naturalist, curious to know the particulars of his brilliant career in the United States, and when I informed them that he was accustomed to lecture to audiences of more than a thousand hearers, — greatly understating the fact, like the honest Irishman who wrote to his friends at home that he ate meat in America once a week, for fear of being taken for a desperate romancer, if he told the whole amazing truth that he had it three times a day, — even then I was listened to with politeness indeed, but I could not help perceiving that they suspected me of drawing an uncommonly long bow.

No one, familiar with the state of things among us, can have failed to be struck with the social consideration in which scientific and literary eminence is held. In some parts of the Old World, the most insignificant scion of an ancient and intellectually worn-out aristocracy — the twentieth son of the twentieth son of the Duke of half an acre, with a standing army of one — takes precedence socially of the greatest names in science, letters, or art. Here, too, the man of science may tranquilly pursue his investigations to the remotest conclusions, with no fear of harm from the spirit of caste, or from traditional opinion, or popular prejudice, or ecclesiastical dogma ; — with no fear of *harm*, I say ; though he may have to encounter bitter words from the newspapers, the platform of the reformers, or even from the pulpit itself. When an eminent in-

vestigator published the conclusion to which he had arrived, that the human races are traceable to more than a single pair, — though the discussion was conducted in a purely scientific manner, without the slightest reference to political, or religious, or philanthropic schemes or dogmas, — he was denounced at the South as the enemy of Moses, and at the North as the enemy of the blacks; the slaveholder, who interpreted literally the book of Genesis, held him up to reprobation as a heretic; and the Abolitionist, who laughs at the authority of Moses, branded him as the hireling of the South. But such hostile attacks on scientific conclusions here must end in hard words; and over hard words truth gains an easy victory. For this reason, the men of science in Europe, especially on the Continent, look with longing eyes to America as the land of promise. One of the most eminent — one who has been competed for by kings, whose labors have been received with applause by both hemispheres — said to me last year: “The future of science depends on America. In this old, rotten Europe, we can do little or nothing against the tyranny of prescription and caste, and the overbearing rule of corporate interests. Hereafter, science must look to YOUR COUNTRY.” The feeling expressed by these frank and emphatic words is by no means uncommon among the literary and scientific men on the continent of Europe. I thought he exaggerated the obstacles to progress in Europe, and the facilities enjoyed among us: but whatever of fact there may have been in that earnest language, adds to the solemn responsibilities of America, to give, at all times and in every way, a generous support to the cause of science and civilization, and not to disappoint

the hopes of those noble minds, who, while toiling for truth in the Old World, send to Heaven their aspirations for its final triumph in the New.

But while we glory in such honorable facts, we must not shut our eyes to the serious deficiencies chargeable on our country. In the department of Natural Science, we have few collections, except those made by individual enterprise and at private expense. The Old World is still our school of letters and art, our scholars are still the pupils and pensionaries of European literature. The Germans, whose achievements in every province of intellectual labor have made the name of their lettered race illustrious, furnish the erudition of the world. Our artists must banish themselves from their native land, because the great collections of painting and statuary are found only under the skies of Italy. Having few resources of art at home, the Greenoughs, Powers, Crawford, Story, Paige, Thompson, whose genius and labors honor the American name, must wander to a foreign soil, made sacred by the genius of the past, and take their lessons in the Ufficii, the Pitti, — the Vatican and the Capitol.

These wants may and ought to be supplied, so far as the nature of the case admits. True, we can never hope to bring the Apollo Belvedere, or the Parthenon, to our shores. We can annex many things, but we cannot annex the Vatican, or the Museo Borbonico, or the buried city of Pompeii; but we are rich and may buy copies of every work of art, and of every book that comes from a teeming press. It is no excuse to say we are a young people, and it takes time to build up great collections and vast libraries. The best libra-

ries in Europe are not so old as that of Harvard College; Göttingen counts not half so many years, and the noble University Library of Berlin scarcely surpasses the average age of man. The library of the University of Athens — although that city of ancient fame lay in ruins after the desperate and bloody war of the Revolution, only five-and-twenty years ago — now contains eighty thousand volumes, and is constantly used by six hundred students and forty learned professors. The smallest German principality has its university, its museums, its richly furnished library, compared with which our own, except the Astor Library in New York, are but poor and insignificant. Will it be said that a petty German principality, of a few square miles in extent, can support establishments which the United States are too young and too poor to maintain?

The museums and libraries of Europe are kept abreast with the progress of the age, by the munificence of even the despotic governments. Men of learning may investigate any subject, without the necessity of travelling from place to place, to find the books or specimens they need. Unhappily, men of learning are not always rich, and works of science, when published, are not always found in railway libraries, and bought by a discerning public, like popular novels. The astronomer, who lives laborious days in the profoundest researches, must publish his results by giving his time and labor gratuitously, and perhaps eke out his publisher's balance against his subscription list by private tuition in the elementary mathematics. A great historical scholar plans a work for the delight and instruction of the world: he must send to Europe and

buy books, and get manuscripts copied, at his own expense: the good taste of the English and American public perhaps in time repays with interest the outlay that must be made, before the History of Ferdinand and Isabella and the Conquest of Mexico can be produced. Another distinguished scholar writes a History of Spanish Literature, destined to take the highest rank at home and abroad, and to become the standard of authority in that department of elegant letters. But that work could not have been written in our country by any scholar, however accomplished, who was not at the same time endowed with a large share of this world's goods. Books must be purchased, public and private libraries in Europe must be visited, and thus, at a vast expenditure of time and talent and money, that great literary achievement is accomplished, conferring on our country the honor of having produced a work on an interesting branch of European literature, which European scholarship welcomes as a precious addition to its treasures of learning. Could a poor man, however able, have written Bancroft's classical History of the United States? Could Longfellow have expounded Dante and Goethe to his classes, with the literary resources of Harvard College Library? Can any scholar write the history of Greek or Roman literature, with no other books than the College Library affords, and no other pecuniary means than a Professor's scanty salary? Is it possible, here or anywhere in the United States, for the scholar, in any department of knowledge, to maintain himself at the height of the age, — to know what is elsewhere known, and what he must know, if he would do justice to his subject or himself?

And yet our relations with the rest of the world are peculiarly favorable to unobstructed progress. We are the friends of all, — the enemies of none. We are the heirs of all past ages. Greece and Rome and Mediæval Europe have bequeathed their treasures, and placed their culture and wisdom within our reach. We can make our own the best contributions of the best minds in the present world, and all over the world. Inventive genius is everywhere redeeming the hand of man from slavery, to give fuller scope to the thoughtful brain. The sweating brow is becoming a reminiscence, or a figure of speech. The forces of nature, working with no sense of fatigue, do willing homage to the mind of man, and render endless service to society by multiplying and improving production a thousand-fold; and no cities of meagre workmen, standing on the brink of famine, arrest by violence the progress of mechanical art, driven to despair by the spectres of falling prices and starvation. All this intellect disengaged from toil by the giant powers of nature should be so much gained to the cultivation and enlargement of knowledge. We sprang from a civilized nation, — not a horde of barbarians, — more than two centuries ago; and for the longer part of that time we have had no greater difficulties to overcome than our brethren who staid at home; not so great as those which have checked the progress of other kindred and older nations. At the present moment the New World need lag behind the civilization of the Old only by the nine days in which the ocean steamers cross the dividing seas; and the returning voyage of these same ocean steamers ought to change the balance on the other side.

An ancient orator, claiming for his beloved Athens the leadership among the states of Greece, rests his argument chiefly on her preëminence in those intellectual graces which embellish the present life of man, and her inculcation of those doctrines which gave to the initiated a sweeter hope of a life beyond the present. Virgil, in stately hexameters, by the shadowy lips of father Anchises in Elysium, calls on the Roman to leave these things to others : —

“*Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra
Credo equidem ; vivos ducent de marmore vultus,
Orabunt causas melius, cœlique meatus
Describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent ;
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento,
Hæ tibi erunt artes ; pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.*”

These lines strike the key-notes to Greek and Roman character, — Greek and Roman history. During the long existence of the Athenian Republic, amidst the interruptions of foreign and domestic wars, — her territory overrun by Hellenic and Barbarian armies, her forests burned, her fields laid waste, her temples levelled in the dust, — in those tumultuous ages of her democratic existence, the fire of her creative genius never smouldered. She matured and perfected the art of historical composition, of political and forensic eloquence, of popular legislation, of lyric and dramatic poetry, of music, painting, architecture, and sculpture; she unfolded the mathematics, theoretically and practically, and clothed the moral and metaphysical sciences in the brief sententious wisdom of the myriad-minded Aristotle, and the honeyed eloquence of Plato. Rome overran the world with her arms, and though she did

not always spare the subject, she beat down the proud, and laid her laws upon the prostrate nations. Greece fell before the universal victor, but she still asserted her intellectual supremacy, and, as even the Roman poet confessed, the conquered became the teacher and guide of the conqueror. At the present moment, the intellectual dominion of Greece — or rather of Athens, the school of Greece — is more absolute than ever. Her Plato is still the unsurpassed teacher of moral wisdom ; her Aristotle has not been excelled as a philosophic observer ; her Æschylus and Sophocles have been equalled only by Shakespeare. On the field of Marathon, we call up the shock of battle and the defeat of the Barbarian host ; but with deeper interest still we remember that the great dramatic poet fought for his country's freedom in that brave muster. As we gaze over the blue waters of Salamis, we think not only of the clash of triremes, the shout of the onset, the pæan of victory ; but of the magnificent lyrical drama in which the martial poet worthily commemorated the naval triumph which he had worthily helped to achieve.

All these things suggest lessons for us, even now. We have the Roman passion for universal empire, under the names of Manifest Destiny and Annexation. I do not deny the good there is in this, nor the greatness inherent in extended empire, bravely and fairly won. But the empire of science, letters, and art is honorable and enviable, because it is gained by no unjust aggression on neighboring countries ; by no subjection of weaker nations to the rights of the stronger ; by no stricken fields, reddened with the blood of slaughtered myriads. No crimes of violence or fraud sow the

seed of disease, which must in time lay it prostrate in the dust; its foundations are as immovable as virtue, and its structure as imperishable as the heavens. If we must add province to province, let us add realm to realm in our intellectual march. If we must enlarge our territory till the continent can no longer contain us, let us not forget to enlarge with equal step the boundaries of science and the triumphs of art. I confess I would rather, for human progress, that the poet of America gave a new charm to the incantations of the Muse; that the orator of America spoke in new and loftier tones of civic and philosophic eloquence; that the artist of America overmatched the godlike forms, whose placid beauty looks out upon us from the great past, — than annex to a country, already overgrown, every acre of desert land, from ocean to ocean and from pole to pole. If we combine the Roman character with the Greek, the Roman has had its sway long enough, and it is time the Greek should take its turn. Vast extent is something, but not everything. The magnificent civilization of England, and her imperial sway over the minds of men, are the trophies of a realm, geographically considered, but a satellite to the continent of Europe, which you can traverse in a single day. An American in London pithily expressed the feeling naturally excited in one familiar with our magnificent spaces and distances, when he told an English friend he dared not go to bed at night, for fear of falling overboard before morning. The states of Greece were of insignificant extent. On the map of the world they fill a scarcely visible space, and Attica is a microscopic dot. From the heights of Parnassus, from the Acrocorinthos, the eye ranges

over the whole land, which has filled the universe with the renown of its mighty names. From the Acropolis of Athens we trace the scenes where Socrates conversed, and taught, and died ; where Demosthenes breathed deliberate valor into the despairing hearts of his countrymen ; where the dramatists exhibited their matchless tragedy and comedy ; where Plato charmed the hearers of the Academy with the divinest teaching of Philosophy, while the Cephissus murmured by under the shadow of immemorial olive-groves ; where St. Paul taught the wondering but respectful sages of the Agora, and the Hill of Mars, the knowledge of the living God, and the resurrection to life eternal. There stand the ruins of the Parthenon, saluted and transfigured by the rising and the setting sun, or the unspeakable loveliness of the Grecian night, — beautiful, solemn, pathetic. In that focus of an hour's easy walk, the lights of ancient culture condensed their burning rays ; and from this centre they have lighted all time and the whole world.

I say then, again, if we cultivate the Roman arts of conquest and annexation, let us temper these too imperious and grasping impulses by the more generous passions which conquered the Roman, even when he despised them. Such a blending of the Greek and Roman, I think the American people already begin instinctively to understand. Amidst the warfare of contending parties, and the clashing of antagonistic interests, our literature is springing up, fresh with the dews of the morning and strong with the strength of noon. Our youthful science is shooting, with home-bred vigor, into ripened health and hardihood. We have artists honorably distinguished in the schools of

Europe. We have poets who are read wherever the English language is spoken, and translated where it is not. And despite the vulgar invectives of political leaders, which so often jangle out of tune and harsh, in the highest places of legislation, I think we, of these latter days, have listened to popular and senatorial eloquence which rose to the level of the Rostrum and the Bema.

Indeed, indeed, as I stood upon the Bema in Athens, and read the mighty sentences of Demosthenes, and to my imagination the Pnyx was again thronged with the returning shades of those Athenian citizens, who listened breathless to the statesman's voice, in the pride of triumph and in the crisis of danger, — with the memorials of past greatness around me, which in their very ruins make the city of Minerva the most attractive city in the world, — my thoughts wandered away far from those scenes of classic and immortal interest, to the assemblies of American citizens who twice crowned yonder monumental height, listening in the open air to the eloquence of the American statesman and orator, who more than any of our times resembled, in the fervor of his patriotism, and the power and dignity of his eloquence, the great Athenian, as he portrayed the illustrious deeds of our ancestors, and, inspired with a strain of Attic enthusiasm, appealed to the ensigns of our present power, — the fleets, the harbors, the temples of the fair city of his affection, — which met his kindling eye as he looked around him.

Gentlemen, if our country owes high and peculiar duties to the world, if she is bound by every tie of gratitude and honor to repay the vast debt she owes to the ages, by a liberal and generous contribution to

science, letters, and art, let these sacred obligations not be left to chance and the chapter of accidents. As the people are the sovereign here, the people must assume the duties, as well as the honors, of sovereignty. Whether legislative support should be more earnestly invoked, or some other form of public duty in this regard be more congenial to the temper of our ruling Demos, may not be clear; but energetic action, having in view the support of literary and scientific organizations on a scale commensurate with the dignity and power of the country and the just demands of the age, is a matter in which every citizen, sharing in the attributes of sovereignty, should feel a personal concern. I speak in behalf of no selfish interest. The scholar and artist and man of science work not for themselves. Riches and public honors are not the meed by which they seek to crown their labors. Other walks in life lead more directly to the goal of ambition and the prizes of wealth. The discovery of a new law in the natural world, of a new star in the heavens, of a new philosophical relation among ideas, of a new trait in ancient wisdom or eloquence, places in the hands of the discoverer no divining-rod that points to treasure hidden from the vulgar eye. Perhaps the love of fame,

“ Which the clear spirit doth stir,”

may silently mingle with the love of truth, and rouse the overtasked mind to fresh energy, by the hope of the “ All hail hereafter.” The vision of homage paid by coming ages, of prolonging an intellectual existence beyond the present into the vast future, of moulding the thoughts and acting on the characters

of the generation that are to people all time, may move the soul of the scholar, as well as of other men. If this be an infirmity, the more of it the better. It is "the last infirmity of noble minds."

But the duties are reciprocal. In the working of any human institutions, there will be much offensive to the taste, the feelings, and perhaps the consciences of delicate-minded men. Plato condemned the excesses of the Athenian democracy, and kept himself aloof from public affairs. Reviewing the policy of the great men who had built up the power of Athens, and placed her at the head of a thousand subject cities, — Themistocles, Miltiades, Cimon, Pericles, — he passes sentence on them all, — excepting only Aristides the Just, — as bad guides of men, because, while extending her dominions, they filled the hearts of the people with a passionate greed of conquest, insatiable desires of pleasure, a reckless disregard of morality, and a carelessness of consequences, which, like a mortal disease, must lead to national decay and death. It was to be regretted that Plato and those who thought with him stood apart from the mass of their toiling countrymen, because the heady course of human passion, inflamed by demagogues, sometimes led them to wrong. So much the more did they need the lessons of moderation and virtue, which the calm judgment of the sages of speculation might have taught them. And yet, if we look into Plato's ideal Republic, — wherein he anticipates most of the notable schemes of social reform palmed upon the world in these days as original speculations, — we shall find, with many passages of consummate wisdom and eloquence, a plan of polity so intolerable, so fatal to all the generous im-

pulses and affections of the heart, so rigidly subjecting every instinct of nature and every possibility of private happiness to an imperious, but merely theoretical public good, that, compared with this philosophic dream, the worst excesses of the worst days of the Athenian Demos would have appeared a blooming Paradise. And who can express the blessings that ancient Demos transmitted to the after world. The genius of Greece still lingers over the land where its triumphs were achieved. Socrates and his teachings; Demosthenes and his eloquence; Æschylus, and the grandeur of his tragedy; Sophocles, with his exquisite beauty, and calm, clear wisdom; Phidias and his marble gods; Ictinos and his Parthenon, are a consecrating presence still, in the land that gave them birth. If it is written in the book of Destiny that nations, like individuals, must have their period of decline, and their term of death, may the genius of our country also consecrate the spots trodden by the best and wisest of her sons; may the spirit of her Platos haunt the soil where stood her Academic groves; may the lingering accents of her Demosthenes still sound on the deserted hill-side where once his patriotic voice pierced the hearts of his contemporaries. If the greatness of our republic is doomed to decay, and, like that of ancient Hellas, to become a silent figure in the gallery of History, God grant she may leave behind her such august memories as these!

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